Thus taught the Prophets

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About the Author

SHAYKH SALMAN AL-AWDAH of Bani Khaled was born in 1955 in Al-Qasim province of Saudi Arabia to a reputable family. It rapidly became apparent to his teachers that he head been gifted with exceptional intelligence and he demonstrated this aptitude by obtaining his bachelors degree and then gaining Masters for his pioneering thesis ***The alienation of Islam*** from the Islamic University of Al-Qasim where he also worked as a lecturer.

Distinguished in Fiqh, Aqidah and the Arabic language, he also possesses diverse talents. He was renowned for his eloquence and for his vigour in confronting corruption with the truth. This gave the Shaykh a global appeal through his public lectures, booklets and best-seller audiotapes that demonstrated a deep understanding of Muslims, a critical analysis of their problems and the practical solutions to them. This made him notable amongst the pioneering group of younger scholars who called for comprehensive reform and renewal, and were truly the conscience of the Ummah.

As a result of his widespread appeal to Muslims worldwide, his courage, his conviction of his Allah-given role as a Caller and his fearing non but Him, he was arrested on 13th September 1994, and up to the publication of this book he is still ***imprisoned without trial or charge!***

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Introduction

VERILY ALL PRAISE is due to Allah, we praise Him, see His help, implore His forgiveness, and repent to Him. We also seek refuge in Allah from the evil that lies in ourselves and from our evil deeds. For whomever Allah Almighty guides, none can lead astray; and whomever He misleads, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah, He is alone and has no partner. I further testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. May Allah bestow His eternal peace and blessings upon him and upon his fellow Prophets who bore the message of monotheism-*Tawhid*, implemented it, and propagated it. Surely they all struggled for the sake of Allah's pleasure in the most faithful manner, until their noble souls answered the call of their Lord and departed this world. May He grant them His choicest, most exalted, and most complete rewards.

We live today in a historic period of religious renewal. A time that we hope will witness the establishment of Islam and its followers upon the Earth. One that will, moreover, bring about the destruction of the enemies of faith everywhere. As the Prophet Musa عليه السلام pointed out to his people and followers when they complained to him: *It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemies and make you inheritors in the earth; so that He may try you by your deeds.* (Surah Al-Araf: 129)

There is no doubt that the safest and best course that should be adopted by those who yearn for reform in our time or in any era – is the way of the Prophets. May Allah commend them and grant them peace. Hence the revivers of the faith today ought to study the history of the first reformers (the Prophets). They ought to revisit this history in order to observe what the Prophets called to. Furthermore, today's faithful must ask themselves: What was the true nature of the prophetic missions? How did they call to the people, and what fate befell them? All of these are important prerequisites that would enable the Islamic workers today to adopt the right course and preserve along it with sure steps and unfailing vision; without being distracted or disheartened by the length of the journey, the ferocity of the waves or the turbulence of the storms.

It is in this context that we have decided to review the call of the Prophets and Messengers; perhaps our effort may result in identifying some of the most important milestones along the way to success.

قال عسى ربكم أن يهلك عدوكم ويستخلفكم فى الأرض فينظر كيف تعملون

The Prophets

WHAT BLESSED, NOBLE, and exalted personalities – They were sent to various people throughout history. They struggled patiently and encouraged others to be patient. They were the beacons from which people in darkness found guidance. They were symbols of mercy sent by Allah to humanity so they may be taken by His permission out from their blind stupor and waywardness to the light of guidance and discernment.

All the Prophets bore a great burden; they met with severe trials and displayed unflinching patience against the abuse of their people. They neither demanded nor sought rewards or thanks of the people. Never did they pursue prestige or engage in temporal vanity. On the contrary, their foremost concern was always that the people should worship their Gracious and Exalted Lord.

Each one of the Prophets was sent to their people at epochal periods in their history. Hence they called by night and day, and exhorted their people both secretly and openly. And in the service of this Call to their Lord they had, more often than not, to put up with fierce opposition, denial, and persecution. On account of this, Allah Almighty decreed that their memory should forever be cherished on the Earth. For there is not one Muslim who does not long to remember them, who does not enjoy speaking about them, or displaying his love for the Prophets by invoking Allah's peace and blessings upon them every time their names are mentioned. Moreover, the majestic station that Allah has prepared for them in the abode of the Hereafter is indeed beyond the imagination of aspirants. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them all.

Imam Ahmad narrated in his *Musnad* on the authority of Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه that he said: "I came upon the Messenger ﷺ while he was in the mosque and sat down in his company." The Messenger said: "O Abu Dhar, have you prayed?" I answered: "No, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "Stand and pray." "So I stood and prayed then I sat down." Then the Prophet of Allah said: "O Abu Dhar seek refuge with Allah from the evil devils from among the jinns and men." I said: "O Messenger, are there devils from among men?" The Prophet replied: "Yes" I said: "O Messenger, what is prayer?" He said: "The best subject, whoever wills should do little and whoever wills should do more." (referring to non-obligatory prayers) I then asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is fasting?" He said: "An obligation which is rewarded generously by Allah." "And what of charity?" The Messenger said: "It will be rewarded manifoldly" I asked: "O Messenger of Allah, which is better?" He replied: "Striving by the indigent and secret charity towards the poor." "O Messenger, who was the first of the Messengers?" "Adam عليه السلام." I asked again: "O Messenger of Allah, was he a Messenger" The Prophet replied: "Yes, a Messenger who was spoken to." "O Messenger of Allah, how many Messengers were they?" He answered: "Three hundred and fifteen, a large group" I then asked the Messenger: "Which is the greatest verse revealed to you?" He said: "The verse of the Throne" – *Allah, there is no God except Him, the Ever living, the Self-subsisting.*

This large number of Allah's Messengers and Prophets – over three hundred – all raised the banner of reform in societies that were steeped in every shape and form of corruption. They were not satisfied to reform themselves only, but instead with the Call of truth reverberating charged forth amongst their people who had deviated from the path of *Tawhid* and divine guidance.

They all carried out this mission. Thus it became necessary to differentiate between the Messengers and Prophets. The more authoritative opinion amongst the scholars indicates that a

Prophet was one who was sent to revive the call of his predecessors but did not bring a new law. All of them, however, Messengers and Prophets, were sent to their people to invite them to the religion of Allah. They were guides to the way of monotheism and they struggled unrelentingly for it.

What awaits the reformers?

THE TASK OF carrying the banner of reform in a deviant society entails that the reformer will have to denounce and oppose things which have become part of the lives, customs, and traditions of the people. In fact, many of these things may have become deeply entrenched in their hearts. And yet, there is nothing which penetrates the depths of the human heart more sweepingly than faith; especially when they have been nurtured by it ever since their childhood. This may take any form, such as the worship of idols like trees, stones, totems, a dictator, or anything for that matter.

The messengers were sent to preach to these people and to dissuade them from the worship of such idols, the belief in which had become rooted in their hearts. *Do you then worship, besides Allah, things that can neither be of any good to you nor do you harm? Fie upon you, and upon the things that you worship besides Allah! Have you no sense?* (Surah Al-Anbiyya:66-7).

What does one expect would be the response of a people when a Messenger condemns them in this manner? Surely this open and hostile confrontation distinguishes between the Messengers, Prophets, and their followers from those who even thought they were themselves righteous, were inclined to withdrawal. They were the ones who did not oppose or resist corruption; instead they were quite content to adopt the easy and simple way which was devoid of obstacles and hazards – in other words the way of passivity and silence!

Let us take as an example the *Hunafa'* (true monotheists of pre-Islamic times). They worshipped Allah only and committed no outrageous acts of transgression against the divine laws. Notwithstanding, they never opposed the vices and excesses that were common and widespread among their people. As a matter of fact, they made no attempt to reform their society which was riddled with polytheism, corruption, and misguidance. As a result, they suffered no persecution or hostility from their people.

Zayd bin Amr bin Nufayl was a prominent member of Makkah's *Hunafa* community. Imam Al-Bukhari recorded a hadith on the authority of Abd Allah bin Umar that Zayd bin Amr bin Nufayl met the Prophet ﷺ at the bottom of Baldah (a mountain between Makkah and Jeddah). The Prophet who was accompanied by Zayd bin Haritha was offered a dish with food and asked to draw near to partake of it. On his part Zayd bin Amr bin Nufayl said: "I do not eat from that which you have slaughtered to your idols and I do not eat except of that over which the name of Allah Almighty has been mentioned."

This incident was only one of many in which Zayd bin Amr bin Nufayl used to reproach the sacrificial meat of Quraysh. Very often he used to remind them: "O noble people of Quraysh, the lamb was created by Allah, He sent water down for it from the heavens, and caused plants to grow from the earth for its sake. Yet even after this, you slaughter it in the name of other than Allah." On other occasions he used to warn: "O noble people of Quraysh be warned of usury, for verily, it will lead to poverty!" It was also reported that he came upon a man who wanted to murder his female servant. He interceded with the man saying: "Do not kill her, what crime has she committed to warrant being killed? If it is too difficult for you to feed and clothe her, then hand her over to me, I shall feed and clothe her." When she became of age he said to her father: "If you wish you may have her, if you don't she will remain with me."

In spite of their occasional rebuke, Zayd bin Amr bin Nufayl and the *Hunafa* of Makkah had little influence in their community. This was because they appeared to have lost all hope of reforming their society which had become engrossed in every shape and color of polytheism, paganism, and deviance in their institutions and behavior. In the final analysis, the *Hunafa*'s despair led them to conclude that they had no ability to confront the evils which were prevalent around them, and hence they chose to limit their efforts only to the task of personal reform. Accordingly, all the reformatory efforts that emerged from them remained confined to very narrow and restricted issues, let alone the undertaking of ambitious campaigns to realize complete reform in all aspects of life.

After raising many Prophets, Allah Almighty finally sent Prophet Muhammad at a time when waywardness prevailed. Through him He provided guidance from the ways of rebellion, vision from blindness, and aided him with noble companions who sacrificed and struggled with all that they possessed in the cause of Allah.

In hindsight, one finds that there was an astonishing and vast difference between the reaction of the Makkan polytheists to the *Hunafa'* and their reaction to the Prophet when he declared his mission. For it was never reported, for example, that Zayd bin Amr bin Nufayl was persecuted and victimized by Quraysh. The most we can say in this regard was that they avoided him. They heard his message yet they never accepted it. Furthermore, they did not abuse Zayd in any way; and it must be said that the *Hunafa'* enjoyed a fair measure of respect and favor from Quraysh.

Although the Prophet Muhammad in the initial stages of his mission only called to true monotheism and encouraged the rejection of polytheism and paganism, Quraysh tried to suppress him using every available method of confrontation and opposition. The apparent reason was because he made no secret of the fact that his mission was one of fundamental reform of society nurtured on the milk of paganism for generation upon generation.

قال أفتعبدون من دون ا ما لا ينفعكم شيئا ولا يضركم
أف لكم ولما تعبدون من دون ا أفلا تعقلون

Al-Jahiliyah destroys its accomplishments

IN THE CONDUCT of their campaign against the Prophet ﷺ, Quraysh abandoned many of the values and principles which the Arabs traditionally upheld and guarded. Foremost among these were the customs of hospitality and generosity towards guests. However, with the advent of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and the acceptance of his Call by elements within their society, Quraysh decided to blockade them in the valley of Abu Talib. They denied the Muslims food and water until conditions became so severe that very often when a Muslim went to answer the call of nature he would find beneath himself dried leather which he ground and ate. In this manner they were strengthened for a few more days.

The polytheists used to hear the hungry cries of babies and they remained unmoved and uninterested in relieving their suffering. Indeed, they discarded the values of kindness and generosity. They became like fierce and savage animals when they encountered the Islamic Call, despite the fact that they were previously well known for their charity and kindness. A good example was ‘Abd Allah bin Jadan who became famous throughout the villages of Al-Dayfan in Makkah. Several sources confirm that ‘Abd Allah used to send callers throughout Makkah urging its people to come and have meals with him. Hence whoever was hungry and in need of food used to attend the home of ‘Abd Allah bin Jadan.

Perhaps what was even more despicable than the blockade of the Muslims in the valley of Abu Talib was the fact that Quraysh, after forcing the Muslims to flee to Abyssinia (today’s Ethiopia) with their religion, sent emissaries there to entice the King to expel them from his land. They sent ‘Abd Allah bin Abi Rabiah, Amr bin Al-As, amongst others to inform the King of Abyssinia: “O King, verily a group of depraved persons have taken refuge in your land, they abandoned the religion of their people and have not entered your religion. They invented a new religion which neither you nor any of us know of. We have been sent by the most noble of their fathers, uncles, and relatives to you urging that you send them back to them because they know them better and know nothing but the distress that they have caused.”

In this outrageous manner Quraysh continued to oppose the believers and pursue them outside of their homeland, thus abandoning the principles of kindness and generosity so often and so proudly mentioned in the most famous Arab poems of *Mu allaqat*. As a result, it became immensely clear that the struggle between Tawhid and *shirk* had now become a full-blown battle.

Furthermore, during this phase the Prophet ﷺ came under attack by Quraysh by means of a campaign of misinformation, disavowal and slander. The aim was to discredit the Prophet, his message and his followers by attempting to create doubts in the minds of the people as to the eventual aims and ambitions of the Muslims.

This is truly a thing designed against you

QURAYSH CHALLENGED THE Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as to the aims of his Call. They claimed that he was motivated by personal ambition: *And the leaders among them go away impatiently saying, "walk away and remain constant to your gods! For this is truly a thing designed against you."* (Surah Sad: 6) This Qur'anic verse confirms that the Qurayshi leadership and nobility encouraged each other to be patient and steadfast in their pagan religion because, as they claimed, Muhammad ﷺ wanted to become their ruler, and it had nothing to do with the Call to Allah.

On this basis and within this framework, they fabricated their claims and lies against the holy Prophet ﷺ. They lied to themselves in order to deceive the simple people, despite their strong conviction that Prophet Muhammad was uninterested in the worldly gains that they accused him of aspiring to. Indeed, it must be recalled that the Makkans had approached the Prophet and said to him: "If in fact you desire to become a king then we shall make you a king, if on the other hand it is wealth that you seek we shall provide wealth until you become the richest amongst us. And, if it is a wife that you seek we shall choose for you the prettiest girl in all Makkah and marry her to you." When they had completed their earthly offers the Prophet recited to them some verse from the Qur'an. Having witnessed his unswerving patience and determination to propagate his Call, Quraysh decided to fabricate accusations against the Prophet even though they were amongst whose who were convinced of his innocence.

In an earlier age, Pharaoh and his followers had said about Musa عليه السلام: *Have you come to us to turn us away from the ways we found our forefathers following – in order that you and your brother may have greatness in the land? But we shall not believe in you.* (Surah Yunus: 78) Glory be to Allah! How amazing? Is it the same Pharaoh who had risen to the highest levels of rebellion, arrogance, and despotism; the same Pharaoh who said: *I do not know of any other god for you except myself* (Surah Al-Qasas: 38). It was he, the Pharaoh, who plundered the wealth and possessions of his people, who seduced their daughters in order to satisfy his carnal desires, who killed the sons of the Children of Israel and preserved the lives of their women folk, who enslaved his own people and abused them. Yes, it was this Pharaoh who employed every method to subject the humiliate others; it was he whom we found when Musa and Harun came to lead the people from the darkness of his repression to the light of obedience to Allah and monotheistic worship, we found that it was he who proclaimed: *Have you come to us to turn us away from the ways we found our forefathers following – in order that you and your brother may have greatness in the land? But we shall not believe in you.* (Surah Yunus: 78).

Of course, the reaction of this despot to the Call of Musa عليه السلام was inexplicable in light of the imminent danger. But the, perhaps, even more disturbing was the attitude of his misguided people who believed him, obeyed him, and followed him in all that he said and ordered. Such was the mentality of his soldiers who opposed and fought against Musa, pursuing him all the way to the sea. Where were the minds of these people and where was their humanity? Truly, Pharaoh had debased them and so they obeyed him, and surely they were a people steeped in wrongdoing.

Accordingly, we find that throughout human history those who opposed the Prophets, sowed seeds of doubt among the people concerning their intentions and the purposes of their Call. They did this not only so that the people would turn their backs on the divine messages, but also in order that authority and supremacy in the earth would remain with them. *Nothing is said to you (O Muhammad)*

except what was said to the Messengers before you. (Surah Fussilat: 43) *Have they (the people of the past) transmitted this saying to these (Quraysh pagans)? No, they are themselves a people transgressing beyond bounds (in disbelief)* (Surah Al-Dhariyat: 53)

وانطلق الملأ منهم ان امشوا واصبروا على ءالهتكم إن هذا لشيئ عجاب قالوا أجئتنا لتلفتنا عما وجدنا عليه ءاباءنــا وتكون لكم الكبرياء في الأرض وما نحن لكما بمؤمنين وقال فرعون يأيها الملأما علمت لكم من اله غيري ما يقال لك إلا ما قد قيل للرسل من قبلك أتواصوا به بل هم قوم طاغون

Verily we see you in plain error

THE ATTEMPS BY the polytheists to spread doubt among the masses of people were often reflected in their sayings: *Verily, we see you in plain error.* (Surah Al-Araf: 60) *They said, A sorcerer or a madman!* (Surah Al-Dhariyat: 52) Indeed, there are numerous examples of this kind, for even Shu'ayb عليه السلام people said to him: *Does your prayer command that we leave off what our fathers used to worship, or that we leave off doing what we like with our property?* (Surah Hud: 87) With this sarcasm and disdain they responded to Shuayb – because as they claimed – he spoke out of folly and error when he called them to Allah.

Thus the enemies of Allah's Messengers always maintained before their people that the Messengers had undertaken their missions because of naiveté and certain deficiencies in their minds. And that they could not carry out any reform with their deficient programs. Additionally they claimed that the Messengers were incapable of relating to the existing realities and complex problems in their societies; and that they were incapable of standing up to the great challenges of their times!

قال الملأ من قومه إنا لنريك في ضلال مبين كذلك ما أتى الذين من قبلهم من رسول إلاقالوا ساحر مجنون

قالوا يا شعيب اصلاتك تأمرك أن نترك ما يعبد ءابائنا أو أن نفعل فى أموالنا ما نشاء

We do not understand much of what you say?

WITH REGARD TO their skepticism about the methods employed by the Prophets to call their people, there were many examples. They said to Nuh: *Much have you prolonged the dispute with us, now bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful.* (Surah Hud: 32) This is how they displayed their discontent and frustration with the Call of Allah's Messenger Nuh عليه السلام. They claimed that he perpetually bombarded them with advice and lengthy debates. This of course reflects their lack of argument and inability to respond to Nuh. Hence, they kept on saying to him: You have indeed spoken a great deal, if you are in fact capable of bringing punishment to bear upon us then do so.

As for Shu'ayb's people, they said to him: *O Shu'ayb we do not understand much of what you say.* (Surah Hud: 91) they accused him of having poor arguments, unclear ideas, and oratorical weakness that prevented him from getting across his message. Of course, their inability to understand his message was essentially due to the fact that they themselves did not want to accept the Call an also because their hearts were covered with rust and murkiness. It is common knowledge that the Messengers of Allah were all gifted with the most convincing and potent arguments. Allah chose them from amongst the noblest sections of their societies and equipped them with this ability to articulate and transmit their ideas. *We have not sent a Messenger except to teach in the language of his own people in order to make things clear to them.* (Surah Ibrahim: 4) Having done so, the recipients of the divine message were in no position to offer excuses.

Thus when Allah سبحانه وتعالى sent Musa he called upon his Lord: *And remove an impediment from my speech. So they may understand what I say. And give me a minister from my family, Harun, my brother. Add to my strength through him, and make him share my task: that we may celebrate Your praise without stint and remember You without stint. Verily You are always aware of us.* (Surah Taha: 27-35) In responding to this plea, Allah said: *Granted is your prayer, O Musa.* (Sura Taha: 36) Hence his speech impediment was cured and he became artful and fluent speaker. And he was aided by his brother Harun. Despite all this, we still find Pharaoh saying about Musa: *Am I not better than this (Musa) who is a contemptible wretch and can scarcely express himself clearly?* (Surah Al-Zukhruf: 52) This is how Pharaoh mocked Allah's Messenger because of the speech defect from which he suffered before his call to mission. However, when this was rectified he resorted to false accusations and contempt in Musa's ability to deliver his message in order to sow doubt in the minds of the people and turn them away from the divine Call.

Such was the folly of the enemies of the Messengers in earliest times and later. Even in our age we find that they have fallen into many contradictions which even the simple person can see through and ridicule. The truth is they have fallen into contradictions because they bear the banner of falsehood whilst the Heavens and the Earth have been established on the Truth. Actually, there is not a single person who has chosen to deny the truth except that Allah has exposed him. And on the contrary, there has not been a person who has defended the Truth except that Allah has strengthened him and corrected his speech.

When Muhammad was brought forth in the Arabian Peninsula he displayed the most excellent attributes of eloquence at a time when his own people took great pride in their gifts of fine speech which they boasted about in front of others. They referred to those who did not speak their language as foreigners. And so when Muhammad came, the Arabs were in no position to say to him what Shu'ayb's people said to him about not comprehending his speech. This was due to the fact that they

knew full well his great oratory abilities. As a result, his fiercest enemies were unable to prevent him from reaching out to the people. They claimed that he was a magician capable of separating a man from his wife and a brother from his brother. Of course, the purpose of these wild claims was to deter the people from answering his Call. A memorable attempt in this context was Al-Tufayl bin Amr, who despite his intelligence, was encouraged by the disbelievers to place cotton in his ears in order to avoid hearing the words of the Prophet which they knew were the truth, and that the Truth has power over the heart: it captivates it and pulls it towards itself. In contemporary language, therefore, the disbelievers of Quraysh had resorted to an 'information blackout' in order to contain the Islamic Call and impose restrictions upon it.

قـالوا يـا نوح قد جادلتنا فأكثرت جدالنا فأتنا بما تعدنا إن كنت من الصادقين قالوا يشعيب ما نفقه كثيرا مما تقول وما أرسلنا من رسول إلا بلسان قومه ليبين لهم

واحلـل عقدة من لسانى يفقهوا قولى واجعل لى وزيرا من أهلى هرون أخي اشدد به أزرى وأشركه في أمري كي نسبحك كثيرا ونذكرك كثيرا وإنك كنت بنا بصيرا

قال قد أوتيت سؤلك يموسى أم أنا خير من هذا الذى هو مهين

We are certainly a nation united, fully prepared against danger

CONCERNING THEIR SUSPICION about the future of the Prophets, the disbelievers of all ages mimic the allegation made by Pharaoh against Musa and those who were with him. *Behold, these [Children of Israel] are but a contemptible band; but they are indeed filled with hatred of us seeing that we are, verily, a nation united, fully prepared against danger.* (Surah Al-Shuara: 54-56) This is the image Pharaoh presented to his deceived slaves that Musa and those who were with him were a small despicable band of troublemakers who hated and begrudged them. Pharaoh then asserts that he and his followers were neither unaware nor incapable of taking action. Indeed, they were all fully aware and observant of their activities. In so many words Pharaoh directed this veiled threat to Musa and his followers, indicating that he would soon draw the limits for the Children of Israel. Clearly he thought that his forces of coercion and repression and his political and economic capabilities were enough to ensure his success. The same attitudes and policies are executed today by the national and international security agencies which have devoted their efforts to fight Islam. Little did Pharaoh know that the fate which awaited him was that he would become a stiff corpse in the sea. Then the sea would throw him on the shore. *Today We shall save only your body, so that you may be a warning [sign] to those who will come after you.* (Surah Yunus: 92) This is the fate of the arrogant transgressors. They were unaware that Allah decreed not only victory for Musa and his believing followers but also pre-eminence and authority in the land.

Among misgivings displayed by the transgressors were their doubts in the future outcome of the Messengers, as expressed by Azar to his son Ibrahim. He said: *Do you dislike my gods, O Ibrahim? Indeed, if you desist not, I shall most certainly cause you to be stoned to death! Now begone from me for good.* (Surah Maryam: 46) This is how Azar threatened his son – if he did not end his Call to monotheism and ridicule of the idols – he would be stoned. Hence he ordered him to keep away from his henceforth. Thus, the bonds of fatherhood and kinship were lost when there was this battle between Tawhid and shirk. Despite the fact that Ibrahim on his part addressed his father with the most gentle and courteous expressions: *O my father! Why do you worship something that neither hears nor sees and can be of no avail whatever to you? O my father Behold, there has indeed come to me [a ray] of knowledge such has never yet come unto you: follow me, then; I shall guide you onto a perfect way. O my father! Do not worship Satan – for, verily, Satan is a rebel against the Most Gracious! O my father! I dread lest a chastisement from the Most Gracious befall you, and then you will become [aware of having been] close unto Satan!* (Surah Maryam: 42-45).

Clearly Ibrahim pitied his father and was very concerned about his guidance and salvation from the punishment of Almighty Allah. Even so he was confronted with the threat: *Indeed, if you desist not, I shall most certainly cause you to be stoned to death! Now begone from me for good!* (Surah Maryam: 46). Meanwhile, the verdict of the people surrounding Azar was no less severe. *Burn him, and [thereby] succour your gods, if you are going to do [anything]!* (Surah Al-Anbiyya: 68) They did not know that Allah had undertaken to protect Ibrahim, his future, and the future of his message. *And whereas they sought to do evil unto him, We caused them to suffer the greatest loss* (Surah Al-Anbiyya: 70) *Behold, then, what all their scheming came to in the end: We utterly destroyed them and their people, all of them.* (Surah Al-Naml: 51).

Ibrahim escaped their evil machinations and became the Imam of all the believers and will remain so until the Final Hour. He was a good model for them, and even Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets was the manifestation of Ibrahim's prayer. As he admitted: "I am the fulfillment of my father Ibrahim's prayer." (related by Ahmad).

As for Ibrahim, Allah caused him to be remembered and praised by subsequent generations. Muslims will continue until the dawn of the Hour to say in their prayers: “O Allah exalt Muhammad and the true followers of Muhammad as You did exalt Ibrahim and the true followers of Ibrahim: surely You are Praised and Glorified. O Allah bless Muhammad and the true followers of Muhammad as You did bless Ibrahim and the followers of Ibrahim: surely You are Praised Glorified.” (related by Al-Bukhari) To this very day Muslims still pray two *rak'ats* (units) of prayer behind the station of Ibrahim whenever they visit the holy mosque in Makkah during Haj or Umrah. This is in compliance with the command of Allah Almighty – *Take, then, the place whereon Ibrahim once stood as your place of prayer.”* (Surah Al-Baqarah: 125) And thus was the tradition of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

In this manner Allah granted Ibrahim a great legacy in this world. As for the Hereafter, the good results will be with the god-fearing. In a fairly length tradition, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ mentioned that in his vision, he saw Ibrahim in Paradise and that he was surrounded by the children of believers.

إن هؤلاء لشرذمة قليلون وانهم لنا لغابظون وانا لجميع حذرون فاليوم ننجيك ببدنك لتكون لمن خلفك ءاية

قال أراغب أنت عن ءالهتي ياإبراهيم لئن لم تنته لأرجمنك واهجرني مليا
اذ قـال لأبيه يأبت لم تعبد ما لا يسمع ولا يبصر ولا يغنى عنك شيئا يأبت إنى قد جاءنى من العلم ما لم يأتك فاتبعني أهدك صراطا سويا يأبت لاتعبد الشيطان إن الشيطان كان للرحمن عصيا يأبت إني أخاف أن يمسك عذاب مـن الرحمـن فـتكون للشيطان وليا قالوا حرقوه وانصروا ءالهتكم إن كنتم فاعلين وأرادوا به كيدا فجعلنا هم الأخسرين فانظر كيف كان عقبة مكرهم أنا دمرنهم قوما أجمعين واتخذوا من مقام إبراهيم مصلى

To restrain, kill or drive you away

IN THE SAME manner that Pharaoh unleashed a campaign of misinformation and slander against Musa, and Azar against Ibrahim in order to threaten their future and the future of their message; Prophet Muhammad encountered similar campaigns and conspiracies from the pagan Arabs after he publicly declared his call. Allah Almighty however exposed their schemes and protected His Messenger. *And [remember, O Prophet] who those who were bent on denying the truth were scheming against you, in order to restrain you [from preaching], or to slay you, or to drive you away: thus they have [always] schemed: but Allah brought their scheming to naught – for Allah is above all schemers.* (Surah Al-Anfal: 30)

With reference to their attempt to 'restrain' the Prophet, this measure was very much similar to what is known today as the imposition of house arrest. For the Prophet was prevented from traveling outside of Makkah or migrating to anywhere else to propagate his message. This procedure as it was employed then also implied the consideration of imprisonment and control of the Prophet with rope and chains to the degree that he was unable to move around as he wished. The issue of murder and physical extermination was also very apparent. The other measure was that of expulsion and exile of the Prophet from his homeland. *To restrain you, or slay you or drive you out"* (Surah Al-Anfal: 30). This is the understanding of the verse as it was explained by Ibn Abbas and transmitted from him by Ahmad and Al-Tabarani.

And so the conspirators' plots were foiled and the end result will be with the Prophet and his believing followers till the day of Judgement. In confronting the Prophet, never did Quraysh think that they were opposing a man whose followers Allah had destined to become millions in every age, or that they were opposing someone whose name would be resounded from minarets five times a day in the East as well as the West.

It never occurred to the polytheists who fought the Chosen Prophet that hundreds of years after his death his followers would become such a force that the powers of the Earth would always be apprehensive and conspiratorial about them. It never crossed their minds that the Islamic lands would erupt in anger because a vile individual had decided to abuse the persons of Allah's Messenger ﷺ. As was the case with the British writer Rushdie after he wrote his book "The Satanic Verses' which maligned the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, his blessed wives, (mothers of the faithful), and his noble companions. Angry demonstrators flooded onto the streets and capitals of countries throughout the world. Calls were made for his trial and execution even in western countries. As for Rushdie himself, he went into hiding out of fear of Muslim anger. The publishing house which published the book also bore the consequences. Yet Muslim rage has never subsided because of this provocation in which the culprit violated the person of the Prophet; the greatest and most beloved individual to Muslims everywhere.

Episodes like this expose and maliciousness of those who combat the Prophet and his Call through deception and hypocrisy. They praise the Prophet with their tongues, staging official celebrations to mark historical occasions in his life – his birthday, emigration, Night Journey and Ascent and other innovated practices. They sing songs of praise about the Prophet and yet they resist his law, his message and religion so as to diminish its presence in society. They oppose those who call to this way through outrageous schemes which expose their sick souls whilst they shroud with external tribute to the Prophet.

وإذ يمكر بك الذين كفروا ليثبتوك أو يقتلوك أو يخرجوك ويمكرون ويمكر ا وا خير الماكرين

The great issue of Tawhid

CERTAINLY THE QUESTION of Tawhid and the singling out of Allah Almighty in worship is the great issue, the self-evident truth to which the Prophets called. They centered all their efforts around this premise; they fought for it and made pace for it. They suffered for its sake and dedicated their hours, night and day for its sake. Pure monotheism was their preoccupation and their practice in secret and in public.

It is a simple and clear matter, far removed from complications and problems and hence everyone is able to understand it, regardless of whether he is a scholar or an illiterate. The Arab among his herds understands it as well as the philosopher among his books. The scientist in his laboratory understands it as well as the peasant in his field. This is because it is the truth with which all the Prophets were sent to all classes of society and was never intended for the intelligent and educated only. Likewise it was not for those in authority or the rich. Indeed it is for all mankind. And this is a part of the simplicity of this religion which the Prophet ﷺ described; as transmitted from the hadith of Abu Hurayrah and related by Al-Bukhari: "Verily this religion is uncomplicated." Part of its ease is the simplicity of its creed. Hence it is possible to explain the tenets of faith to any person in about ten minutes and he will go away having understood and digested it with the greatest ease.

On the other hand, when one examines the creed of the misguided Christians, one encounters in its complications and obscurities that make the most intelligent and ingenious dispute it and be puzzled by it, let alone the ordinary and common folk. As a result, they submit to whatever they are told by their priest and they ascribe to their religion secrets which should be not discussed. Thus they believe and they remain blindfolded.

When we examine the various schools of philosophy we find that even many educated people are incapable of understanding the existentialist thought as an example, let alone to become convinced of its assumptions. The Islamic monotheistic creed is by contrast clear and simple. *There is no god except Allah* presupposes that the believer should turn towards Allah with his heart, his limbs, and all his deeds. That he should abandon all idols, gods, and transgressors which the polytheists take as gods and worship instead of Allah.

Civilized and primitive polytheism

IDOLS, GODS, AND transgressors include everything which is worshipped other than Allah. It is, indeed, of ignorance that one should think that this includes only trees, stones, stars, and such things which are worshipped other than Allah.

The worship of such things was consistent with the primitive mind of the Arab in the Days of Ignorance. This is seen in the tales of those who even worshipped idols made from dates, so that when they became hungry they ate these very gods. There was also the case of Abu Raj' al-Ataridi who used to search in the desert for four stones; three of these he made a tripod for his kettle. He used to face the fourth of these stones and pray to it. If he did not find stones he would scatter some dirt over an area then milk his goat on it and worship it.

If this was consistent with the uncultured Arab mind, as it still is with the understanding of primitive peoples today, the affluent material civilized generations also contain numerous forms of paganism which are in accord with the minds of its people. These range from the worship of desires, intellect, material, as well as the Pharonic deification of persons and earthly constitutional systems.

Therefore, it is plain that shirk includes the obedience to human beings in matters which involve the disobedience to Allah. And thus, people are obeyed after they were given the absolute right to legislate and determine what is lawful and unlawful; making the right to enjoin and forbid exclusively to others instead of Allah. Indeed, they are treated with reverence, requests, aw, fear, hope, love, and other forms of worship.

In the same manner, it is also clear that polytheism includes the following of man-made laws govern the wealth, blood, honor, and bodies of people. They forcefully impose upon people obligations which they are incapable of resisting or lifting from their shoulders. Likewise it involves granting loyalty, love, and submission to unbelievers and hypocrites. These, in effect, are all forms of shirk.

The Prophets of Allah propagated the monotheistic creed which necessitated the singling out of Allah in worship and full surrender to Him from every shade of polytheism. They presented these teachings to people in a manner which was clear and easy. *Worship Allah alone: you have no deity other than Him.* (Surah Al-Araf: 59) It is the duty of those who call to Islam that they should likewise present the message in the same manner as the Prophets did. It is not in the interest of Islam that they should give people the impression that Tawhid – worship of Allah without associating partners to Him, is something difficult or incomprehensible and which only a few people are capable of practicing. All of this is contradictory to the reality of this natural faith and contrary to what the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ illustrated. For example, a Bedouin who spend all his life in polytheism and paganism would sit for a few moments with the Prophet and listen to his explanation of Islam and the meaning of monotheism; in the end the Bedouin would leave as a Muslim – indeed as a believer and a caller to Allah's religion. He would then go to his people and proclaim: "Verily the idol of al-Lat is no god and the idol of 'Uza has no honor, I disbelieve in them and those who worship them instead of Allah." So entrenched would be his conviction that when his wife comes to him he would rebuke her and drive out saying: "Islam has decreed separation between you and I."

With this ease, passion and depth they understood Islam and thus became its propagators from the moment they became convinced of its tenets. In this light it is not fitting for us to create

unnecessary confusion for people. The religion is crystal clear to all, both the common people and the learned understand Allah's signs and the prophetic traditions related to monotheism. Our duty, therefore, is only to explain the meanings of some texts that may appear difficult to them.

Neither is it proper for those who have inherited the mantle of the Prophets to obscure the tenets of the faith in order to derive material gain from over lengthy periods of instruction. Nor should we be like those university lecturers who make others believe that they have no right to speak or give their views about a matter on the pretext that others do no understand or perceive the dimensions of the issue. In other words, as if they alone have been endowed with comprehending minds.

A Muslim reading of Surah Al-Ikhlas (the 112th Surah) with its five verses is enough to fill his heart with the love, praise, knowledge, and Tawhid of Allah. It is enough to confirm all the qualities of Allah's perfection; and more so, absolve Him from all faults and shortcomings: and which Muslim does not know this Surah? And shall we not proceed from this great things which he knows, so that we may explain to him its meaning, lay bare before him its proofs, and call him to take from the Qur'an this rich knowledge. Without creating a barrier between him and this knowledge with modern jargon, imported terminology or 'logical' deductions that render the adoption of this faith to become like the taking of mathematics or algebra!

اعبدوا ا ما لكم من إله غيره

What is the conflict about?

IT HAS BECOME clear and self-evident that the battle between the Prophets and their adversaries was actually centered around this great pillar – the Tawhid of Allah, and singling Allah out with the entirety of worship acts. This battle was never about secondary juridical differences, or about elements of legal intricacies, or about an issue for independent judgement. Instead, we recognize that the laws of the Prophets themselves were numerous, each according to the time, place, and those addressed. That these laws were brought in order to organize people's lives in such a manner which sooner rather than later guaranteed their interests. The Prophets were, therefore, brothers; their religion – Tawhid – as was reported by the Messenger ﷺ was one even though their laws were somewhat different.

In this light, will not those who are concerned with the affairs of Islam become enlightened? Will they not renew the Call of the Prophets and their followers, and fight the same battles that the Prophets fought? Will they not cease to preoccupy themselves with insignificant matters that distract them from the real issue? For surely, this great battle of truth against falsehood has been the concern of the reformers and renewers throughout history.

The battle which Shaykh Al-Islam ibn Taymiyyah, for example, fought against his adversaries was first and foremost a battle of Tawhid. It was a war against every form of *shirk* in worship, against transgression, and misguidance. Similarly, the battle waged by Imam Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab, the renewer, was one against various forms of polytheism which had become rooted on the Arabian Peninsula. He invited the people to the worship of Allah Almighty alone and to abandon all forms of paganism and polytheism. His struggle was never about side issues or juridical differences. For this reason one cannot ascribe to Shaykh Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab, his followers, or students an independent school of jurisprudence. Their legal thought is the same as the Imams who preceded them. Thus, they always chose that which was closes to the evidence but never aspired to establish a fifth school of Fiqh, as some falsely claim.

And so while many people still collect the books of Shaykh Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab, read them, listen to, and even memorize them, some are nevertheless ignorant, or consciously ignore the real nature of the conflict which the Shaykh inspired. Indeed, many of those who profess knowledge and identify with the Islamic Call keep themselves busy in petty quarrels, lost in emptiness with those around them. They engross themselves with books, dissertations, and audiocassettes on secondary issues leading to time-consuming debates, big and small; refuting, rebuking and rebutting each other in issues that completely overwhelm them, producing nothing of benefit akin to an empty windmill!!! All of this relates to issues that are more often than not minor and where a difference of opinion is tolerated. These issues do not usually contain elements of absolute guidance or clear-cut misguidance. Instead, they invariably bear elements which are partially right and partially wrong. Possibly part of the right may be here while another part is somewhere else. And the issue should remain within these limits.

In this light we are obliged to express our concern about the share of the Tawhid of Uluhiyyah (maintaining the unity of Allah's worship and exclusively of rule) amid these great efforts that are being expended. How many books do we possess on this subject? How many research papers? How many articles! How many discussions! How many cassettes concerning this matter?

Sloganeering Islam is not enough

AS WE HAVE indicated before, there is no doubt that the issue of Tawhid of Uluhiyyah is indeed a plain matter. Bet hat as it may, the issue of Tawhid and the declaration *There is no God except Allah* is not, however, an empty slogan which is shouted. It is rather a truth which is actually lived. Those who attack the callers to Islam today on the pretext that they are raising slogans to which they are hostages, they know very well that the ones who really raise slogans are the rulers who promised their people paradise on earth, united, and victory over the enemy; yet all of these sweetened promise did eventually evaporate into smoke.

When the empty slogans dissipated and the people finally knew who were the real bearers of truth – the supporters of the Islamic causes and callers to faith – they drifted towards them in all lands without exception. And to the same degree that Tawhid is not a slogan which is raised, it is also not simply a word which is uttered only devoid of any intent to act. For had this been the case, the polytheists would have hastened to accept it. They pointed this out to the Prophet ﷺ when he requested from them the Tawhid declaration word: "By your father, [had it been one mere word that does not entail action] we would give a thousand words!"

Surely, the act of merely uttering the Tawhid declaration: 'there is no god except Allah' is an easy matter. The Arabs as well as the non-Arabs can proclaim it, and so too can the big and small, for it requires no great exertion. Yet the matter goes much further than this since this declaration demands the fashioning of all life's activities according to Allah's law. It demands that the individual should not devote his prayers, Zakat, or worship to any other than Allah Almighty. *Say (O Muhammad); Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of (mankind, jinns and all that exists). He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.* (Surah Al-Anam: 162-3) So whoever declares 'That there is no God except Allah' then supplicates to, or seeks assistance from a prophet, righteous man or the like, would have contradicted this great pronouncement.

In the same manner, the declaration that 'there is no God except Allah' also demands the formation of economic systems according to Allah's commands, far removed from the Eastern communist systems and the interest oriented systems of the West. For even though the eastern communist collapsed, the Western systems continue to execute their crimes in all parts of the world. Indeed all indications are that the interest-ridden systems of the wets would continue to entrench itself, contrary to the laws of Allah.

Still further, the declaration 'there is no God except Allah' also demands that all rules, laws, and systems should not be taken from sources other than the Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ - the Sunnah. For in reality there are two programs and two systems of life. The system or religion of Allah on the one side, and the system of kings on the other side. The religion of Allah implies the worship of Allah only with all that monotheism stipulates in human affairs. Hence Allah Almighty says in the story of Prophet Yusuf: *He could not take his brother by the law of the king except that Allah willed it.* (Surah Yusuf: 76) Therefore, the religion of Allah is clear, it is not the religion of the kings, and it is not the religion of the transgressors.

That there is no God except Allah determines that Allah alone, should specify what is lawful and what is unlawful, what is right and wrong, what is truth and falsehood, and what is virtuous and

corrupt. Consequently, the rule by what Allah has revealed is, indeed, an integral part of "There is no God except Allah". Conversely, the rule by other than what Allah has revealed is a form of polytheism which not only contradicts the great declaration, but also amounts to a contention with Allah in His affair, and a challenge to Him in His realm. Thus Allah Almighty declares: *They have no Helper or Disposer of affairs other than Him, and He makes none to share in His Decision and His Rule.* (Surah Al-Kahf: 26).

In another verse of the Glorious Qur'an Allah states: *Or have they partners with Allah (false gods), who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not allowed.* (Surah Al-Shura: 21) And so on one, whoever he might be, has the right to legislate in lieu of Allah, not even the greatest scholar. For the scholar when he says this is lawful and this is unlawful, he does not come with anything from himself. Instead he is only articulating the verdict of Allah and His Prophet and translating the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions. If, therefore, this is the position of a scholar in this matter, the person who is not learned is even more constrained by this principle. *And if any of them should say: "Verily I am a god besides Him (Allah)" such a person We would be recompensed with Hell.* (Surah Al-Anbiyya: 29).

Those who consider the Call for the rule of Allah's law a kind of 'politicization of religion' – meaning that religion has been subjected to political cravings and personal glory – who catalogue accusations in their newspapers and books against the callers to monotheism, obviously these detractors are only repeating what the enemies of the Prophets said in earlier times.

We must, accordingly, address the masses who have confidence in our words. And thanks to Allah there are many. We say by Allah, we are not in pursuit of personal gain and neither are all sincere callers to truth. And they, by Allah's grace, have become numerous in all parts of the world. They are not hankering after personal goals and benefit. For had been the case, they are well aware of the way to achieve them.

On the contrary, the callers to faith aspire to reform. Hence they adopted the difficult path of the Prophets in which there is ridicule, animosity, the outpouring of slanderous accusations against them, and every kind of physical and psychological persecution. *Verily, many Messengers were denied before you (O Muhammad), but with patience they bore the denial, and they were hurt, till Our Help reached them.* (Surah al-Anam: 34) *And many a prophet fought in Allah's cause and along with him large bands of religious learned men.* (Surah al-Imran: 146) Allah Almighty also says concerning the Children of Israel: *That is because they used to disbelieve in the signs and evidence of Allah and killed the Prophets wrongfully.* (Surah Al-Baqarah: 61).

This is the way of the Prophets, filled as it is with dangers. Many of them were killed, many wounded, some were isolated and others denied the right to leave their lands. They were persecuted but remained patient. Furthermore, they never cowed to the cheap delights of this world. Indeed, it has become well known who are the ones that hanker after temporal gains. They are the ones pursuing these gains even if it is on the ruins of the Muslim nation and destruction of its interests.

Where are the secularist parties that used to fill the air with national cries? Have they not sold our countries with all their wealth to the disbelievers? Where are the sponsors of liberalization, are they not dying for the sake of the 'New World Order' – which is itself a cover hiding the desire to imitate the miserable West. Where are the callers to democracy who seize by force the will of millions when it is not consistent with their desires?

Surely the reformers and callers to faith have turned their backs on the delights of this world, and chosen what is with Allah. They were pleased if circumstances dictated, even to leave their homes and children and face the hardships of living in strange lands in order to achieve the pleasure of Allah. Indeed their master and leader, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ was himself wounded in the battle of Uhud, receiving injuries to his head and suffering a broken tooth. On that occasion he remarked: "How can a people prosper when they have shed the blood of their Prophet." (related by Al-Bukhari). Moreover, the greatest goal of the Prophets and Messengers was always either victory or martyrdom. Prophet Muhammad eloquently expressed this when he said: "I wish that I would die in the way of Allah, then I would be brought back to life and killed again, then brought back to life and killed again." (related by Al-Bukhari).

Accordingly, the Prophets of Allah never craved after this world and they never nursed ambitions for rank and positions. On the contrary, they were the furthest people from these aims. And Allah knows that the sincere callers to faith are also the most disinterested in the things which the worldly people compete for. They are the most disinterested with the things that their accusers strain their necks to gain.

One of these guided callers once declared: "I would much prefer to be postman in a country ruled by Islam rather than to be a ruler or minister in a land that is not governed by the laws revealed by Allah." In the light of this example and many similar ones the empty claims leveled against the callers to Islam that they aspire to political power are wholly destroyed. The truth of the matter is that they all have a profound concern for the affairs of the Muslim nation. What there is no doubt about is that we worship Allah and remain devoted to His religion by considering politics to be an integral part of religion and the doctrine of separating politics from religion is tantamount to disbelieve and defection from the Islamic faith.

The reform of political corruption was one of the tasks which the Prophets were raised to carry out. Allah Almighty says in His Book which can never be approached with falsehood from any angle: *They who do not judge in accordance with what Allah has bestowed from on high are, indeed, deniers of the truth!* (Surah Al-Maidah: 44) *They who do not judge in the light of what Allah has bestowed from on high – it is they, they who are truly iniquitous!* (Surah Al-Maidah: 47) *And they who do not judge in accordance with what God has revealed – they, they are the evildoers!* (Surah Al-Maidah: 45).

In this same context Allah Almighty also says: *For clearly, most clearly, have We spelt out everything!* (Surah Al-Isra: 12) *We have bestowed from on high upon you (O Muhammad) step by step, this divine writ, to make everything clear.* (Surah Al-Nahl: 89) *Verily, this Qur'an shows the way to all that is most upright.* (Surah Al-Isra: 9) Meaning, of course, in every aspect of life, it guides the way to all that is upright; in economics, politics, social affairs, media, and administration.

During the Makkan period certain Qur'anic verses were revealed to the Prophet rebuking the polytheists for their governance by laws other than the law of Allah. This is one form of the polytheism into which they have fallen, and from which the Prophet had come to rescue them. And this is one of the meanings of 'There is no God except Allah.' Allah says: *he who rejects the powers of evil and believes in God has indeed taken hold of the firmest bond.* (Surah Al-Baqarah: 256) And for every affair to Allah and His Prophet there is a ruling; likewise, the forces of evil also have an opinion. For this is the religion of Allah; and this is the religion of evil, and it is necessary to counter the call of the religion of evil and tyranny, which pervades all environments through the advance of communications technology and its influences.

It is vitally necessary to confront these media distortions with clear explanations of Allah's law, which the human soul naturally accepts. This is the long and difficult road which the Prophets chose. Their followers are obliged to choose this path also, regardless of the efforts, hardship, and inconvenience it may cause them. They should know, moreover, that had the Prophets or the reformers fought the various forms of polytheism manifested in social conditions *only*, which contradict the declaration *'There is no God except Allah'*, then no one would have opposed them. Indeed only a few would have stood up to them. But the Prophets did not call to one aspect of religion only, instead they tried to reform all affairs of life. As the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "No one will be able to arise with this religion except he who embraces it from all its sides." There is no doubt, therefore, that among the demands of the declaration of *'There is no God except Allah'* is the surrender to Allah Almighty only and recognition of His right to legislate and rule.

قل إن صلاتى ونسكى ومحياي ومماتي رب العلمين لاشريك له وبذلك أمرت وأنا أول المسلمين

مـا كان ليأخذ أخاه في دين الملك إلا أن يشاء ا ما لهم من دونه من ولي ولا يشرك في حكمه أحدا ويقتلون

النبييـن بغـير الحـق ومـن لم يحكم بما أنزل ا فأولئك هم الكافرون ومن لم يحكم بما أنزل ا فأولئك هم

الفاسـقون ومن لم يحكم يما أنزل ا فأولائك هم الظالمون وكل شيء فصلنه تفصيلا ونزلنا عليك الكتب تبينا

لكل شيء إن هذا القرءان يهدى للتى هي أقوم فمن يكفر بالطغوت ويؤمن با فقد استمسك بالعروة الوثقى

Realizing loyalty to Allah

AMONG THE REQUIREMENTS of the declaration *There is no God except Allah* is that the individual should also free himself from loyalty to others beside Allah. Free himself from loyalty to the iniquitous, loyalty to the pagans, to the Jews, Christians, secularists, hypocrites, and others from among the nations and schools that have strayed from the path of the Prophets and Messengers.

Hence the individual should fully dedicate his loyalty to Allah, His Messenger, and the believers. He should disassociate himself from all other loyalties to the extent that his heart vibrates with this feeling. Thus he cannot incline except to the people of truth and faith. He prays for them, becomes happy whenever they are victorious, sad when they suffer affliction in any battle between truth and falsehood, irrespective of whether it is a military, political or media battle and regardless of whether this takes place in the west or east, above every land and below every sky.

And thus among the signs of a believer is his happiness for the success of the religion of Prophet Muhammad and sadness for its decline. In the same manner, among the signs of a hypocrite is his happiness for the decline of Islam and his sadness with its ascendancy. The hypocrite cannot control himself when he sees the believer visited by adversity. He becomes overwhelmed with delight and he reveals this heartfelt joy over what befell the believers. This is because his loyalty is not to the believers and his heart is filled with hatred and hypocrisy. Of course, he expresses these feelings in his own special way. If he is a politician he will express it in a neatly packaged statement. If he is a journalist he will present his view in an attractive bulletin. Needless to say, none of them can conceal the truth. A Muslim is obliged, therefore, to love his brother Muslim who celebrates the Oneness, uniqueness and exclusivity of Allah. He should desire for him success, pray for him, sympathize with him, and defend him. In fact he should know that these are rights which his brother has upon him, and are in facts, acts of worship regardless of the outcomes of the battle. Therefore, whether the Muslim brother will triumph or not is never the measure for support. Surely uncertainty in loyalty is among the traits of the hypocrites. If they witness one group achieve success they support them, and if they see the other group attain victory they support them also. As Allah Almighty says: *Those who but wait and see what betides you: thus, if triumph comes to you from Allah, they say, "Were we not on your side?" – whereas if those who deny the truth are in luck, they say [to them], 'have we not earned your affection by defending you against those believers?"* (Surah Al-Nisa: 141) And this is how the hypocrites change their colors and deceive others, for at times they say that which pleases both parties and join the victorious party after their success.

Thus whenever one examines any of the Islamic issues especially when the Muslims are persecuted and are in a state of weakness, one finds that the leaders of the hypocrites emerge from within their ranks showing their teeth and offering help to the polytheist and secularists. Indeed they assist them and subject all the resources that Allah has given them to help the enemies of Islam – totally contrary to what was practiced by the Prophets. As Musa عليه السلام said: *O my Sustainer! [I vow] by all the blessings which You have bestowed on me: never shall I aid such as are lost in sin!* (Surah Al-Qasas: 17) Those who identify with Islam in their speech are many but in reality they do not realize genuine monotheism and they do not exercise the real meaning of disassociation from the polytheists and secularists. Instead they have established the greatest doctrinal hypocrisy in their beings which takes them outside the fold of Islam and makes them sympathize with the polytheists everywhere, helping them against the believers and being happy with their ascendancy. Their vacillating tongues declare: "O my Sustainer whatever You have blessed me with, I will be a helper to the polytheists and I will use whatever You have given me to support their cause against the believers!

Clearly the issue of loyalty and disassociation is a fundamental one; hence some of the scholars have said: “After the issue of the Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah, no other issue was detailed in the Qur’an as that of loyalty and disassociation.”

And neither did he bid you to take the angels and the Prophets as your lords.

NEVER DID ANY of the Prophets call to praise their persons. Allah Almighty says: *It is not conceivable that a human being unto whom God has granted revelation, and sound judgement, and prophethood, should thereafter have said to people, "Worship me beside God"; but rather [did exhort them], "Become men of God by spreading the knowledge of the divine writ, and by your own deep study [thereof]." And neither did he bid you to take the angels and the Prophets for your lords: [for] would he bid you to deny the truth after you have surrendered yourself unto God?* (Surah Al-Imran: 79-80).

Never did any of Allah's Prophets or Messengers call upon the people to worship him, thereby making him a god in place of Allah. On the contrary they all ordered their people to obey and worship Allah and reject any other than Him. They nurtured their people's hearts on the principle that benefit and harm, giving and denial, are all determined by Allah. And that the period of one's life is also in the hands of Allah, and that no man is capable of benefiting or harming, or granting life or death or bringing back to life any of his fellow human beings. Similarly, that speaking the words of truth does not separate one from his sustenance or shorten his life span. And that Allah only is the Debaser, the Elevator, the Withholder and the Bestower, the Malefactor and the Benefactor, and to whom all affairs are in His hands. Their hearts were filled therefore with the love of Allah and the desire for His grace. It was at that point the exaltation, love, and fear of the creation was expelled from their hearts and the glory, awe, and majesty of Allah filled them instead. Hence they spoke the truth without fear of the consequences, not fearing the wrath of the detractors. They complied with the commands of Allah and they avoided the polytheists, they helped Islam and the Muslims everywhere and supplicated to Allah, and were patient with what befell them. They did not attach to this world any great value even though they could have benefited from some of its bounties that Allah made lawful. They subjected the earth for their own service but never did they themselves become servants of the earth. Hence they utilized whatever is in it to secure the favor of Allah and success in the Hereafter.

The callers to Islam should, therefore, work with the seriousness that was a feature of the prophetic missions before them in the sense that they should not call the people to any particular juridical school; or impose upon them their own individual judgement and analysis. Neither should they seek to create personality cults for any individual; except of course the person of the Prophet Muhammad for he is the master of the followers and the Imam of all others, and we call people to adopt his ways and follow him openly and secretly.

If the people see us callers to faith – calling one day to the worship of others than Allah in any aspect of life, or to follow an example other than the Prophet Muhammad in some affair, they should reject our Call and throw into our faces all our preaching and consider it a denial of all that we pledged and all of our submission to the religion of Allah. Rather, the correct *Da'wah* is to the Book of our Lord and Sunnah of our Prophet and both are forms of monotheism – Tawhid of Allah, in worship and obedience, plus that of the Prophet by following what he brought from his Lord.

The field of the battle and its weapons

IF THE SUBJECT of the battle between truth and falsehood is that of the unity of Allah or Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah, then the stage of this battle is life in all its aspects and details. The life which is contested between the servants of Allah and the servants of the devils.

There is no doubt that the servants of the wrongdoers always work to make people ignorant of the real nature of monotheism and isolate it to certain limited corners of life. This is conducted in order to enable them to deceive the people and lead them astray with their dreadful plans. To the degree that if the evildoers claim, only claim, that they rule by the laws of Allah, and that they are calling to the religion of Allah, and working for reform, the people would believe them, because they do not know the real essence of Tawhid. They do not realize that it encompasses every aspect of life. If they knew this they would have said to the evildoers: *Produce an evidence for what you are claiming, if what you say is true!* (Surah Al-Baqarah: 111) They would also call aloud: "How can you contradict in your every action what you say with your tongue?" Likewise it is among the objectives of the evildoers that they keep the people in a state of ignorance of monotheism so that they would be able to create doubts among the Ummah concerning the Call to Allah. And sow seeds of skepticism in the souls of the masses concerning the aims of the callers and their message.

The weapons of this war between polytheism and monotheism, between the servants of the devils and the servants of Allah, are every means that can be used. For the servants of the devils would not fear to use any means to realize their objectives. Even though their aim is deprave, for it involves the worship of other than Allah. They have no compunctions about using corrupt and debased methods to achieve their goals, including lies, deception, theft, espionage, and any other methods that fall into their hands.

Indeed they go even further by employing methods of violence, repression, eviction, murder, and al other forms of tyranny. Thus we find that the countries which claim to protect human rights do not, under any circumstances, show any value for the Muslim person. They attach no value to his blood, in fact they use weapons of mass destruction against them… and what are weapons of mass destruction anyway?

Is not the poverty that has been imposed upon the Muslims among the weapons of mass destruction? To the extend that those Muslims become wholly preoccupied with finding their daily bread. Hence we find vast numbers of Muslims dying from hunger in many Islamic lands. By Allah, you can see the Muslim infant reeling in pain and dying of hunger in front of your own eyes in some countries!

Is not the promotion of ignorance among the Muslims of their religion and their worldly affairs a weapon of mass destruction used against them? Such that Muslims become ignorant and do not practice their religion, not do they invite others to it. They do not follow those who preach to them, ignorant of the world around them. So much so that they have become dependent on the enemies of Islam even for their daily needs.

Is not the drowning of the Muslims in places of diseases, despair, and decay among the weapons of mass destruction directed by the enemies of Islam to physically get rid of them, reduce their numbers, and dominate their lives!

Is not the destruction of the Muslim economies and their oppression in debt which they could never extricate themselves from except with new timetables that increases the burden and increase the debts – is this not among the weapons of mass destruction?

All these destructive weapons and others are used by those who call for the protection of human rights. Where are the human rights, or is the white Westener the only person whose rights and dignity should be protected?

This great battle between the various forms of polytheism and the one true monotheism, truth and falsehood, the callers to Allah and the callers to evil will continue to be fought in every sphere of life. Undoubtedly, the battles between shirk and Tawhid is the greatest of all battles.